

Claims 6 and 13 are presented in independent form, and recite the two alternatives originally recited in Claim 1, as entered during Chapter II of the corresponding P.C.T. international application on June 14, 1999.

Prior Claims 1-5, as entered on June 14, 1999, during the Chapter II, P.C.T. international phase, have been cancelled.

Finally, an amended textual Specification was filed on June 14, 1999, during the Chapter II, P.C.T. international phase, which should be considered in combination with the drawing figures published in the P.C.T. application on November 5, 1998.

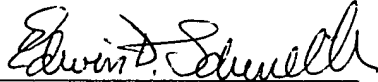
The amended textual Specification, filed June 14, 1999, has been further amended by the instant Preliminary Amendment, as Page 6, line 3 (i.e., deleting the word "amended"), as recommended by the IPEA/EP, on the last page of the International Preliminary Report, just prior to the pages containing Applicant's amended Specification.

The application is now in condition for a full examination on the merits.

Accordingly, an early examination on the merits and allowance are, therefore, respectfully requested and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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